

Member Highlight

Ann McCleary



Truth be told, I had no idea that the National Council on Public History existed until 1996. I had been working in the field of public history for twenty years—in both museums and historic preservation, while dabbling a little in the humanities and adjunct teaching—before deciding that I wanted to try teaching full-time. When I looked at teaching jobs, I discovered “public history.” And in my first interview, when the committee asked about how I would use *The Public Historian*, I had to pause. I had never seen the journal.

I had been active in professional organizations, but somehow I had not been aware of NCPH. After the interview, I quickly researched the organization to learn more. Still, I was not sure how much NCPH would benefit me until I accepted my first teaching position in 1997. I discovered what would become my new professional home—an organization that embraced all the aspects of public history I enjoyed and would help guide me as a public history program director.

At my first NCPH conference, I met colleagues who would help me learn more about teaching public history. One mentor was Connie Schulz, who had completed a program review for my university before it created the position I accepted. Connie talked with me at length that first meeting, and for many years after, about developing and administering a public history program. I met other educators who shared their perspectives, and I attended sessions on teaching public history. NCPH provided the training that I needed to grow into my position.

What I particularly appreciated about NCPH, in comparison to organizations which represented only one type of public history work, was that the conference spoke to the broader overall themes of the field and explored the connections between various types of work. As a public historian

who dabbled in various fields, I had already seen common threads, but NCPH provided that opening to examine them further. I took advantage of opportunities to talk to practitioners of all segments of our profession—from museums and preservation to the park service, heritage tourism, and other emerging fields. I gained important insights that I could bring back to my teaching. NCPH kept me fresh and knowledgeable about the current developments in the field.



The Center for Public History's West Georgia Textile Heritage Trail Team, which includes undergraduate research assistants, undergraduate interns, and graduate research assistants with Dr. Kevin Fontenot and Mick Kenney at the Little Dalton Theatre.

My involvement with NCPH strengthened when I became a member of the board and particularly when I served as the chair of the Curriculum and Training Committee. During that time, our hard-working committee made great strides: establishing a roster of educators for program reviews, creating the first best practices documents, and beginning to create bibliographies for teaching. This experience strengthened my commitment to NCPH, its staff, and its members.

At this time, I made the leap from being an individual member to asking our institution to join as a patron. I knew that I wanted to do more for NCPH, and I recognized what the organization had to offer to me, our program, and our students. Asking our institution for the additional funds for this membership was not a tough sell: there are many valuable benefits of patron membership. Probably the best perks were the marketing opportunities for the program, especially having our institution included on

the newsletters, the Annual Meeting *Program*, and the website. Our initial funding came, in fact, from recruitment monies. Now, however, our College has incorporated the patron membership because it understands the importance of NCPH for our program.

Since that first meeting, I attend NCPH conferences regularly, and I always look forward to them. I have encouraged students to participate, and we have sent students as our resources allowed. This year, we sponsored ten students in Nashville, and every one of them talked about how much they enjoyed the sessions and the conference participants. With so many graduate students coming now, there is a real community for these members.

I think it's important to give back to an organization that means so much to us. NCPH provides professional training for practitioners, educators, and students. Our university's patron membership is just one way that we can contribute to NCPH.

Ann McCleary is the director of the Public History and the Museum Studies Programs and the Center for Public History at the University of West Georgia, in Carrollton, Georgia. She has worked in the public history field since 1976. She is currently involved in several projects with the National Park Service, and has been serving as the state scholar for three Smithsonian Museum on Main Street exhibits with the Georgia Humanities Council.

Nashville Annual Meeting Wrap Up



Attendees gather in the Exhibit Hall



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President's Comments



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Reflecting on our Community

Our meeting in Nashville was special, and gave us opportunities to celebrate as well as to mourn. The highlights will remain with us for years to come. It was quite a record setter, with more than 800 attendees who enjoyed everything from a brilliant host city and fantastic tours to a slate of remarkable sessions capped by a mesmerizing plenary with Rip Patton recounting his experiences as a Freedom Rider in 1961. Amidst these joys, however, was a somber thread interwoven within the proceedings that began months before with the untimely loss of one of our organization's early pillars, and ended with the tragic loss of one of our next generation of public historians.

On the final evening of the meeting, the NCPH staff received word that Lissa Capó, who joined us from The Historic New Orleans Collection and had been an active member since 2009, had passed away. My first encounter with Lissa was in 2011 in Pensacola where she shared a poster entitled "Throwing" History Away. Lissa hailed from neighboring Louisiana, I recall being impressed with this new professional and how she had crafted a truly compelling and engaging presentation about not just Mardi Gras traditions but the evolution of "throws" that are a complex and fascinating staple of Gulf Coast parading culture. In those brief but invaluable moments, I realized that she was a practitioner who really understood the essence of public history.

In many ways, these kinds of memories permeated the entire conference. In early February, Jann Warren-Findley, former NCPH president and a staple at meetings for decades, passed away in Arizona. Although she had been dealing with health complications, until the very end she remained a constant

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Welcome New Members!

Wendy Adams Indianapolis, IN	Joshua Cole Wilmington, NC	Keith Gill Grand Rapids, MI	David Johnson Hoboken, NJ	Carey Nigh Shelbyville, IN	Tammy Schane Doylestown, PA	Mark Wentling Randolph, MA
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Lisa Bentley Nacogdoches, TX	Benjamin Craske Las Cruces, NM	Midori Green Minneapolis, MN	Megan Kendrick Burbank, CA	Bill Peterson Flagstaff, AZ	Patrick Shea Medord, MA	Brandon Winford Knoxville, TN
Bradley Boshers Murfreesboro, TN	Laura Darnell Murfreesboro, TN	Sarah Guthrie Lorton, VA	Robert Kent Granite Falls, NC	Robin Pinto Tucson, AZ	Kim Smith McHenry, IL	John Winters New York, NY
Ashley Bouknight Spring Hill, TN	Gainor Davis Westminster, MD	Annemarie Hagan Brampton, ON Canada	Tyler Kinsella Pullman, WA	Clare Pope San Bernardino, CA	Taylor Spence Clayton, Australia	Alex Yepiz Hacienda Heights, CA
A. Sheree Brown Wilmington, DE	BruceDearstyne Albany, NY	Gloria Hall Worcester, MA	Louis Kyriakoudes Hattiesburg, MS	Karen Ramsdell Goleta, CA	Evan Spencer Murfreesboro, TN	Nancy Yerian Cincinnati, OH
Jody Brumage Middletown, MD	Danica Dewar Hamilton Township, ON Canada	John Hardin Montgomery, AL	Ryan Lintelman Arlington, VA	Leslie Randle-Morton Wilmington, NC	Cecelia Stephens Villa Rica, GA	Alysha Zemanek Speedway, IN
Caitlin Butler Wilmington, NC	Sherrie Dux-Ideus Amherst, NE	Keith Harrison Fort Lupton, CO	Heather Lonks Flushing, NY	Joseph Rizzo Morgantown, WV	Daniel Stevens New York, NY	NCPH would like to extend a special thanks to our new Partner members:
Richard Butler Cambridge, United Kingdom	Kathleen FitzGerald Maynard, MA	Betsy Hedberg Denver, CO	Michelle Lorimer Fontana, CA	Jeb Rosebrook Iowa City, IA	Michael Stone Baltimore, MD	Arizona State University Tempe, AZ
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From the Interim Executive Director



Stephanie Rowe
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We're barely halfway through now, but so far, 2015 has been a momentous year for NCPH. In the spring we celebrated another record-breaking and vibrant conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Our attendance was up by over 30%, compared with just a year ago! However, the conference energy and enthusiasm was tempered for those of us who have had the privilege to work with John Dichtl as our executive director over the last nine years. The year began with this challenge, as John announced his appointment as the new President and CEO of the American Association for State and Local History. We have become accustomed to having John at the helm, guiding us through the rapids patiently, thoughtfully, and skillfully. Although John may be irreplaceable, we are firmly on course to find his successor. The search committee, chaired by Bill Bryans, is hard at work reviewing applications, and the Board of Directors plans to make a decision about the new executive director at its fall meeting this September. The transition is underway. I assumed a new role as Interim Executive Director on May 1. As NCPH navigates this time of change and growth, I look forward to serving NCPH and its over 1,400 members in this new capacity, as we select our next executive director.

As you explore the pages of this issue of *Public History News*, and read our weekly *Public History News Updates* in your email, you'll see all the exciting things accomplished this spring, and what's to come in the months ahead:

- Over 800 people gathered in Nashville in April for our 37th NCPH Annual Meeting—what a way to celebrate 35 years of NCPH history!
- Attendees at our revamped awards breakfast heard remarks from G. Wesley Johnson, one of the founders of NCPH and founder of *The Public Historian*. Wes was in attendance as a recipient of our inaugural NCPH Founders Award, created by the Council of Past Presidents.



Wes Johnson, founder of *The Public Historian* talks with outgoing editor, Randy Bergstrom in Nashville.

- In March, our New Professional and Graduate Student Committee unveiled its consumer's guide to public history graduate programs, *The Public History Navigator*. We hope the new guide will serve as a tool for anyone weighing the pros and cons of pursuing a degree or certificate in public history. The committee hosted an exhibit booth at the Nashville conference to solicit ideas for distribution of the guide. Read more about the project and find a link to *The Public History Navigator* here: <http://bit.ly/1ESDFZq>
- Our Vice President, Alexandra Lord, is working now, along with input from staff and committee chairs, to make appointments to our 20+ committees and task forces. In an effort to make committee appointments a more transparent process, we put together this PDF: <http://bit.ly/1bvKPba>. The NCPH Vice President makes committee appointments each spring after the annual meeting.
- September 16-19, the NCPH board and staff will head to the American Association for State and Local History's annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky. While there, NCPH will be sponsoring and helping to organize a poster session, as well as conducting our fall board meeting.
- In October, NCPH will offer two Mini-Cons, with the potential for two more. The first, an Active History Conference, "New Directions in Active History," is October 2-4 in London, Ontario. The second, "Immigration, Migration, and Memory in Public History," is being held at Texas State University on October 10. We hope these meetings will benefit members who are not able to travel to a given year's annual meeting, and offer more chances for the

types of energy and idea-sharing that you just can't find online. If you can, please attend these pilot Mini-Cons and let us know what you think!

- The 2016 Program and Local Arrangements Committees, along with the NCPH office, are hard at work planning for the 2016 joint meeting with the Society for History in the Federal Government in Baltimore, Maryland. The theme for the meeting is "Challenging the Exclusive Past," and the call for proposals is now open at: <http://bit.ly/ncph2016>.

This is an exciting time to be involved in the NCPH community and the field of public history! All of us in the executive office in Indianapolis stand ready to assist and support our members, as always and especially during this time of transition. Don't hesitate to get in touch with any of us.



2016 National Council on Public History and Society for History in the Federal Government Joint Meeting

"Challenging the Exclusive Past"
Baltimore, Maryland, March 16-19, 2016
Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel

Formal preservation and interpretation of the past began as a movement to celebrate great men and elite spaces. Slowly, and with difficulty, this is becoming a more democratic and inclusive effort. We believe that public historians have an important role to play in the ongoing work to expand national, state, local, and global narratives. What are the most effective and engaging means for expanding interpretive practices and professional spaces in order to promote full inclusion of previously marginalized peoples and places? To what extent have new, more democratic and engaged public history practices changed museum collections and exhibits, preservation practice, law, and public commemoration? And what happens when formerly disenfranchised publics assert their right to tell their own histories? These questions get at the very meanings of public history and citizenship. As 2016 will mark the centennial of the National Park Service and fifty years of the National Historic Preservation Act, in Baltimore we invite public historians to explore the promise, the successes, and the challenges of developing a more inclusive public history landscape in the twenty-first century.

The online proposal system is open; proposals are due by **July 15, 2015**.

Arden, New York. Interracial activities at Camp Gaylord White. Farm Security Administration - Office of War Information, c. 1943. From Library of Congress.

Actions of the NCPH Board of Directors

After the September 19-20 meeting of the NCPH Board of Directors in St. Paul, Minnesota, and prior to the spring meeting in Nashville, the board convened electronically and by telephone and took the following actions:

- John Dichtl notified the board in late December that he would be resigning as executive director on April 30, 2015. The board then created a task force of board members to organize the search for a new executive director in cooperation with the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts, Department of History. The board also created a search committee.



Former NCPH Board President, Marianne Babal Presents outgoing NCPH Executive Director, John Dichtl, with a memory book signed by members and friends in Nashville, TN.

- Promoted Stephanie Rowe from program manager to associate director, and, upon John Dichtl's departure, to interim executive director.
- To ensure greater continuity in a time of multiple transitions in NCPH leadership (co-editor, editor, and executive director), and to strengthen connection of the board to *The Public Historian*, the board changed the NCPH Bylaws to add the co-editor as an ex officio non-voting member of the Board of Directors.
- Appointed James F. Brooks, professor of History and Anthropology at the University of California Santa Barbara, to a three-year term as editor of *The Public Historian*.
- Agreed that the NCPH should sign onto the federal government's Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation's plan for "Preservation50" to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Decided that NCPH should sign onto the National Parks Conservation Association's "National Parks Second Century Action Coalition" letters to the President and to Congress about the FY16 budget request for the National Park Service in time for the NPS Centennial.

- Decided that NCPH should cast its vote on the National Coalition for History (NCH) Policy Board for NCH to sign a letter drafted by OpenTheGovernment.org. The letter, which was ultimately signed by ten other pro-transparency groups, was sent on March 17 to Secretary of State John F. Kerry and the Archivist of the United States David Ferriero, requesting that they independently verify the preservation of federal records among former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's emails in electronic form. The groups wrote, "the task of determining which emails constitute federal records should not be left solely to Mrs. Clinton's personal aides. Rather, the Archivist and State Department should oversee the process to ensure its independence and objectivity."
- Approved a statement of the organization opposing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in Indiana while recognizing the wide-ranging opposition to the act within the city of Indianapolis, where NCPH is based, from municipal government, leading institutions of higher education, sports associations, small businesses, and major American corporations headquartered there.

On Thursday, April 16, 2015, the NCPH Board of Directors convened during the NCPH Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, and took the following actions:

- Approved the Minutes of the Spring 2014 Board Meeting in Monterey, California, the Fall 2014 Board Meeting in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and the February 2, 2015, Board Meeting by conference telephone call.
- Elected Board Member Jill O'Gline Titus to the Executive Committee to replace Board Member Dee Harris, whose term on the board was ending.
- Discussed a proposed set of guidelines, "Board Member's Roles & Responsibilities," and created a committee of the board to revise the document for the Fall 2016 Board Meeting.
- Heard the presentation by Oral History Association Executive Director Clifford Kuhn about the "Oral History as Scholarship" report and how it will involve NCPH.

- Agreed to reconsider at the Fall 2016 Board Meeting an advocacy policy that would provide guidance on how NCPH will respond to or lead efforts to speak out on issues of concern to the organization and the public history community. Created a committee of the board to revise the document.
- Approved the Revised 2015 Operating Budget, which takes into account the expenses of the executive director transition process, a reconfigured membership coordinator position, and the creation of the associate director position.
- In response to the recommendation of one of the Working Groups formed for the 2015 Annual Meeting as well as two of the board members, the board voted to create a Committee for Government Historians.
- Voted to continue planning for the 2017 Annual Meeting to be held in Indianapolis despite the recent controversy about Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The board noted that the City of Indianapolis, the Starwood chain's Westin hotel (the conference venue), Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (which hosts the NCPH executive office), and NCPH's Indianapolis-based conference partner organizations all have strong commitments to equality and diversity.

Feedback Wanted on New Best Practices Document

Best Practices for Establishing and Developing a Public History Program

"As graduate programs in public history have proliferated, many educators and professionals have become concerned about the quality of training provided and the future of the field. Public history differs from traditional forms of graduate study in its emphasis on skills-focused courses, civic engagement, and interdisciplinarity. These characteristics are well established. Providing high-quality training requires dedicated funding and administrative support, ongoing curricular development, and partnerships with outside organizations. Depending on curricular emphases, it may also require use of specialized resources and facilities. In addition, administrative practices at the department and college level may need to be modified to meet program needs."

The Curriculum and Training Committee is currently soliciting comments on their newest best practices document. The full draft is available for review and comment on History@Work.

Council of Past Presidents

Robert Weyeneth, Immediate Past President | weyeneth@mailbox.sc.edu

When the Council of Past Presidents held its inaugural meeting at the Monterey conference last year, it quickly became apparent that this group of past NCPH chairs and presidents was deeply interested in documenting our organizational history and recognizing those who helped create NCPH. Following the Monterey meeting, the CPP pulled together a comprehensive database of 140 people who were present at “founding moments” in NCPH history – the meetings in Montecito, California in April 1979, at the National Archives in September 1979, and in Pittsburgh in April 1980 – together with the names of the thirty-two original directors of the organization. We dubbed these folks “the founding generation” and proceeded to contact all 140, letting each know of the CPP’s interest in gathering information on the early years of NCPH. We inquired if anyone was planning to attend an upcoming annual meeting, beginning with Nashville, and whether we could collect their stories through oral history interviews.

Phil Scarpino, Barb Howe, Rebecca Conard, and Ted Karamanski formed an oral history subcommittee, and at the Nashville meeting Phil, Barb, and Rebecca carried out four hours of interview with G. Wesley Johnson. Wes co-developed the public history program at Santa Barbara along with Robert Kelly; he founded and served as the first editor of *The Public Historian*; and he was a driving force behind the creation of NCPH. The interview will be deposited in the NCPH archives at IUPUI, together with the spreadsheet

identifying the 140 members of the founding generation. A strong foundation has now been laid for systematically gathering additional oral interviews over the next few years. We anticipate that our meeting in Baltimore in 2016 will be a particularly convenient venue for reaching many of those who were active in organizing NCPH and formally incorporating it in the District of Columbia on May 2, 1980.

A second retrospective initiative over this last year was the establishment of the Council of Past Presidents’ Founder’s Award. This new award is intended to recognize people who were present at the creation of NCPH and who played critical roles in the organization’s early success. It will be presented every year over the next few years. G. Wesley Johnson and Robert W. Pomeroy, III, are the first recipients. Bob Pomeroy drew on his considerable experience in the business world to help define the initial organizational structure for NCPH; he participated in the original leadership of both NCPH and *The Public Historian*’s editorial board; and he authored widely used publications that allowed students to see the range of careers available in public history. Many credit Bob for inspiring NCPH’s welcoming ethos.

Based on their own first-hand knowledge, several of those “present at the creation” collaborated on extended tributes about the contributions of Wes Johnson and Bob Pomeroy to the field of public history, which can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1dwGfv5>. As



NCPH Founder G. Wesley Johnson (right) with outgoing NCPH Executive Director, John Dichtl in Nashville.

we mark the 35th anniversary of NCPH this year, the Council of Past Presidents is looking forward by helping all of us to remember our past.

For a list of who is on the Council of Past Presidents, go to <http://bit.ly/1j0Qng2>. The NCPH website also has a link to the history of the organization at <http://bit.ly/1s7bxc5>.

President’s Comments (cont. from page 3)

and global crusader for the discipline she loved, and was a primary catalyst in coordinating this coming summer’s International Federation of Public Historians meeting in Jinan, China. Fortunately, before her passing, she received word that she was this year’s recipient of the NCPH Robert Kelley Memorial Award that recognized her outstanding achievement to the field.

During my time at ASU I had the privilege of working with Jann on a range of projects, and she helped define how I established relationships and interacted with the professional world. During the “Reflections and Contributions” roundtable session that celebrated Jann’s life, it was clear that she had these same influences on most everyone she knew. From the initial moments of greeting long-time colleagues at the hotel in Nashville through the closing events, while the joy at seeing old friends was the same, there was a palpable sense of shared loss surrounding Jann’s absence.

Reflecting on these experiences, in some ways these losses underscore what exists at the core of our organization. In contrast to some professional worlds, where there is a focus on individual research agendas and activities, public historians, by the very nature of our discipline, have a tendency to focus on collaborative enterprises. While we all have our own projects and far too little time to complete them, perhaps we all need a moment to take a closer look at those around us who make us who we are. Whether it be a long-term relationship, like Jann, that shaped your development or a recent colleague or new contact, like Lissa, who provides a fresh perspective, each contribute to shaping our worlds. At the end of the day, the conduit to make these connections is a key characteristic of what makes the NCPH special.

Highlights from Nashville Working Groups

Eight of the working groups that met during the NCPH conference in Nashville have provided summaries of their discussions. If you are interested in creating a working group for the joint NCPH / Society for History in the Federal Government meeting in Baltimore, proposals are due July 15. (See the call for proposals at <http://ncph.org/cms/conferences/2016-annual-meeting/>.) NCPH working groups are seminar-like conversations of 8-10 people during the annual conference that explore, in-depth, a subject of shared concern and work toward a common purpose and outcome.

After the Administrative History: What Next?

A number of us involved in researching and writing administrative histories and staff at the parks where these documents gathered in Nashville to talk about what we do once an administrative history is completed. After a lively pre-conference discussion, we narrowed our discussion down to three major topics.

First, what makes a good administrative history? To make the document useful, we needed to discuss what types of information should be included and how should it be organized. One of the big questions is always how to organize the information—chronologically or thematically—and we agreed both are important. Participants agreed that incorporating context with American history and Park Service history was important as well.

Second, how might administrative histories be used and by whom? Participants agreed that incorporating park histories into training is important for all staff. Authors can also help prepare training materials for staff and interpretive materials for visitors. Another key question was how can we pull together administrative histories to create a broader history of the National Park Service? Could NPS create directories of these administrative histories for authors, NPS staff, and others to use?

Last, what are the future directions for administrative histories? Should agencies and parks focus on specific themes and program? We all recognized that full-fledged administrative histories take considerable time and resources. How could we accomplish something useful in a shorter period of time with reduced budgets? One suggestion was to work more with partners, such as universities, to engage graduate students. Several parks take advantage of the CESU (Cooperative Ecosystems Study Units) to work with college faculty and graduate

students. We discussed other creative approaches that we might take to collect and disseminate this history.

The working group has several ideas for following up. First, we plan to create a blog post for *History@Work*. John Sprinkle, bureau historian for NPS, is the guest editor for a special volume on park service history for *The Public Historian*, and he asked participants to consider contributing articles for the issue. In addition, John's office is updating the guidelines for administrative histories. Lastly, we are considering developing a follow-up panel or discussion at the 2016 NCPH meeting which will be held in conjunction with the Society for History in the Federal Government. — Ann McCleary

Free, Separate, Uncertain: Can Public History Play?

Our group wanted to think about the intersections of play and public history, and the ways in which the processes of Play could facilitate new ideas and understandings of what it means to engage the public in experiencing the past. We were interested not only in convening a conversation at the conference, but also giving working group participants - and the rest of the NCPH community - an opportunity to put these ideas into practice... that is, to play.

Prior to the conference, we commented on each other's case statements and used the statements to develop three play-related activities for a pop-up Play Station at the conference. On April 16, participants could visit three stations and experience different forms of playing with the past. Our first station included the electronic game *Papers, Please*, in which you take on the role of an immigration official in a fictional post-Soviet

republic and decide who can cross the border, as well as two different board games. In *Timeline*, players must put historical events in chronological order, and in *Gameface*, players must identify historical figures based on a picture and a series of clues.

At station two, we offered a blank Memory Wall, on which attendees could write down their memories of play and how it influenced their understandings of history. The wall prompted nostalgic conversations about childhood games and toys, and also more critical discussions of the differences between games and play and the utility of historically-minded play in developing historical consciousness.



Memory Wall pop-up Play Station in Nashville Exhibit Hall.

Finally, for those more interested in wordplay, station three offered participants four Mad Libs, written by a subset of the working group, that explored what it means to work as a public historian in a museum, a nonprofit organization, and academia.

We encouraged players at every group to use #playNCPH on social media to share their experiences, and later Storified these tweets.

While each activity represented a different kind of play, it became clear to us as co-facilitators that playing had actually prompted the members of our group, who had never met before, to connect with each other, making our conversation the next day during the working group session flow



Pop-up Play Station games in Nashville.

continued on next page →

Highlights from Nashville Working Groups (cont. from page 7)

easily. We began with an overarching question - how do you define play? - and from there considered issues as varied as the possibility of empathizing with the past, whether fun is neoliberal, the pedagogical aspects of play, play as attitude and process rather than activity, and the need to consider varied developmental and physical abilities when developing play-based exhibits and activities.

To get a good sense of the discussion, see our storified tweets here: https://storify.com/rizzo_pubhist/can-public-history-play. To join a Zotero group that includes resources related to play and public history go here: https://www.zotero.org/groups/play_and_public_history.

We are still defining what our next steps will be, though there is interest in a series of blog posts that delve into more specific aspects of our conversation. — *Mary Rizzo and Abigail Perkis*

History on the Edge of Nowhere

Our working group consisted of participants from institutions that face issues of isolation. We sought to facilitate a discussion centered on developing creative solutions for institutions lacking direct access to large populations. Before the conference, our participants contributed to a private blog to begin a dialog concerning the specific issues faced by their home institutions. These issues ranged from struggles and successes with various marketing strategies, the role (or lack of) social media, and confronting local perceptions and prejudices. Related readings from museum professionals augmented these posts.

When we convened in Nashville, our discussion highlighted the need to re-align the narratives our institutions tell to better meet the needs of local communities. In most cases, this entails drawing attention to stories that already exist at the site but currently receive little, if any, interpretation. This shift to tell a more complex narrative could serve to create spaces more meaningful to local communities, thereby increasing local awareness and support. In order to sustain that support, participants pointed to the importance of hosting community events even if those events do not directly relate to the stories told in exhibit space. In some cases, this may involve a widening of mission statements to better serve our audiences.

The group ended with a discussion of marketing options for gaining attention. Participants agreed that social media serves as a powerful tool to pique public interest in upcoming programs. We also discussed the ways in which artifacts can play a role in shaping social media outcomes. Some made a point of noting the continued importance of traditional media attention through partners like local radio and television stations.

Moving forward, the group agreed on an “unmanifesto” addressing the positive strategies promoted during the meeting as the final product of this discussion. We may explore a follow up panel at next year’s annual meeting in Baltimore. The dialog will continue and the participants invite other public historians on the edge of nowhere to contribute to the discussion freely. — *Shae Adams and Courtney Hobson*

Pedagogy in Public: Academic Programs and Community Partners

Prior to the conference, we focused on six key themes, such as how academic instructors and community partners can establish a relationships, what each side is looking for in these relationships, what projects/products should look like, how instructors can balance

the need for theory with hands-on experience, and how to measure success and/or failure. In Nashville, we focused in-depth on two questions: the creation of a memorandum of agreement and the evaluation process. The first of four key points that came out was that the evaluation process should take place during the project, immediately after it, and further down the line, and the evaluation should evaluate the project/product and the partnership more broadly. Second, do not just evaluate the success or failure of the product. Adapt to changing needs or abilities over time, and remember that success can include learning during the process, not just the success of the final outcome. Third, instead of a memorandum of agreement, think about a memorandum of understanding. This allows for more flexibility on all sides. And finally, think about what the role of students should be in the planning and evaluation process, not just in the product creation.

From here, this group will continue to work together to create a set of documents to help academic instructors and community partners in forming these partnerships and evaluating their products. The group is divided into teams to design a sample MOU and a series of evaluation questions. In addition to these suggested guidelines, there also will be a best practices document that looks more broadly at the issue of community partnerships. The goal is to disseminate this information at the next NCPH meeting or in a journal article and to make it all available to NCPH members. — *Debra Brookhart and Elyssa Ford*

Public History as Digital History as Public History



Public History as Digital History as Public History working group. Courtesy Serge Noiret.

As public historians increasingly engage with digital history, our group convened at the conference to workshop the relationship between digital and public history. The goal was to bring together participants from a diversity of backgrounds -- faculty, graduate students, and public history practitioners -- to talk about their experiences working at the intersection of the two fields. The working group’s brief was to think about how best to define the relationship between digital and public history and how to train a rising generation of public and digital historians.

Exploring the connections and differences between the two fields led to exciting questions. Do public historians think more digitally than digital historians think publicly? Is all digital history public history? Does all public history need to be digital history? Posing these questions resulted in a lively discussion that focused where the two fields overlap. The visual analogy offered was that of a Venn diagram: while there is significant overlap, not all public history is digital and not all digital history is public. Importantly, public history asks digital

Highlights from Nashville Working Groups (cont. from page 8)

history to begin thinking about issues such as audience, collaboration, engagement, and shared authority. In turn, digital history offers tools and methods such as mobile devices, social media, and websites to reach new audiences.

With excitement about the intersections, the conversation shifted to how to train future public historians. We discussed assessing and learning the appropriate technologies, digital literacy, and labor. Many advocated a project-based approach. Educators, professionals, and students alike called for further training in digital methods such as how to build a website, catalogue data, frame narratives, and manage projects. The conversation illuminated the continued need to engage in a dialogue between the two fields as they continue to evolve.

All interested are encouraged to check out the working group's Tumblr (<https://www.tumblr.com/blog/dh-ph>). – *Lauren Tilton*

Religion, Historic Sites, and Museums

Presenting the history of religion in a historical context is an important means of making historic sites and museums relevant and for facilitating discussion of issues of social justice. At a time when academic historians are focusing research on the history of religion and Americans express high interest in religious subjects, museums remain reluctant to talk about the larger roles of religion in American society and tend to avoid complex, difficult topics that are perceived as too hard to convey to public audiences.

A major theme of our discussion centered on the need to know more about our visitors, what interests them, and what they bring to the interpretive experience. There was agreement that museum visitors know little about religious history, their own faith traditions, and those of others. It is important to convey the complexity of religions and show that they are not homogenous or unilateral. There was general consensus that we need more visitor research that addresses differences between insiders and outsiders and to ask and listen to faith communities.

One barrier for museums is fear and ignorance. We are afraid of getting it wrong or appearing to endorse a particular set of beliefs. Historicizing religion is different than proselytizing. Context gives visitors the tools to place their own experiences and beliefs into a historical framework. Group members suggested an interdisciplinary approach that could draw from methodologies used by the history of science and medicine, religious studies, psychology, and public policy. It is important to build empathy with visitors using personal stories and artifacts. Artifacts of home and family can help establish personal connections to religious history and practice through everyday places as well as sacred places. There was discussion about the relationship between religiosity and tolerance and whether they are compatible. Can learning more about one's own and others' religions help promote greater tolerance? There is research that indicates that empathy is learnable and expandable. If visitors can establish empathy with people from other backgrounds, especially at an affective/emotional level, it is easier to develop deeper understanding and greater tolerance. –*Melissa Bingmann*

Teaching Public History through International Collaborations

Our working group started from a series of recent collaborative efforts on teaching public history in cross-cultural settings. With specific case

studies with a diverse geographic focus, as a group, we have covered the following key issues:

First, language and cultural issues create confusions, even breakdowns, in communication. For example, cultural differences profoundly affect how people evaluate public history sites or messages delivered from museum exhibits. Second, different pedagogic philosophies make us realize that some basic assumptions in our field are not so basic. Sharing authority, for example, does not come easily in classrooms that have long been dominated by one authoritative voice, or sometimes a phenomenon we identified as “shared resistance” surfaces. Third, how do we sustain international collaborative projects? Our cases prove that dialogues in a cross-cultural environment often stand as one-time opportunities for public historians to engage in a particular project, so sustainability becomes a challenge. Also, more relevant to an emerging market economy, we find it difficult to provide valid intellectual justification for training in public history if the field is attached to a strictly market-driven economy from the start.

While it's yet to be seen if those international collaborations will mature into successful cases for teaching public history, public history remains collaborative by nature. It continues to push its edges, be they national, cultural, or disciplinary. Our discussions did not end in Nashville, however. We are developing our case statements into short articles for a special section in a scholarly journal. –*Na Li*

Who Speaks for Us? Government Historians and the NCPH

As it has grown and developed, NCPH has responded to the changing needs of its membership in part by establishing committees to promote the interests and needs of various public history practitioners. We established a working group of historians employed at various levels of government in the United States and Canada to examine the need for better representation of this segment of the membership. In the months leading up to Nashville, we conducted a vibrant cyber conversation (<http://bit.ly/1ELCM2B>) exploring a wide range of issues and concerns specific to government history work and its representation within the organization. The group concluded that a permanent committee would be useful as a means to continue to explore these issues.

The NCPH Board of Directors agreed, formally establishing a committee at the Nashville meeting. They gave us a multi-part assignment: to serve as a forum for practitioners working in government, to advocate for the needs and interests of this particular group within the broader public history community, and to recruit presentation proposals to highlight government history work at annual meetings. In the coming year the new members of the committee will develop a mandate, and define our scope and mission.

The next year will be exciting for government historians in the NCPH. The 2016 conference in Baltimore, which meets jointly with the Society for History in the Federal Government, will provide a unique forum for government historians to discuss their work within the larger field of public history. The meeting's theme, “Challenging the Exclusive Past,” lends itself to discussions at the intersections of public history, oral history, and government history. – *Katherine Scott and Jean-Pierre Morin*

Nashville Annual Meeting Wrap Up

Hundreds of public historians converged on Nashville, Tennessee, where NCPH held its 2015 Annual Meeting on April 15-18 to talk about “History on the Edge.” With over 800 registered attendees, this year’s meeting was NCPH’s largest ever – and not by a little. This conference represented a more than 30% increase from last year’s already-record-setting attendance of 609 in Monterey.



Attendees Check In at Registration.



Attendees of the 2015 Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee enjoy the Opening Reception on Wednesday evening, April 15.

About 48% of attendees responded to our post-meeting evaluation. Attendees reported loving the substantive conversations, strong sense of camaraderie, and close ties to the conference city that mark NCPH meetings. We heard that the meeting was energizing, and re-focused attendees on their work and scholarship.



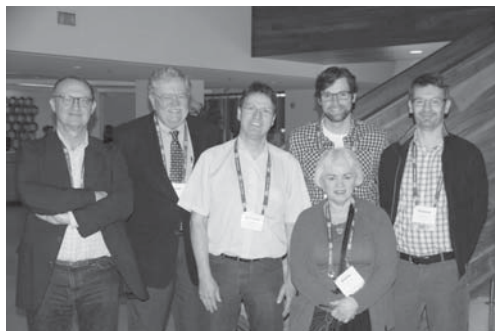
Poster Session and Reception.



Participants gather at the New Professional/Graduate Student Social.



Speed Networking.



International Federation for Public History Steering Committee. Courtesy Serge Noiret.

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Congratulations 2015 Award Winners!

During the Awards Breakfast and Keynote in Nashville, NCPH President Patrick Moore presented awards to our 2015 winners. A full listing of awards for 2015 and guidelines for 2016 awards nominations are at www.ncph.org



NCPH President Patrick Moore and Erin Bernard, winner of an NCPH Graduate Student Travel Award, at the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, April 18.



NCPH President Patrick Moore shakes the hand of Ashley Rose Creegan, winner of an NCPH Graduate Student Travel Award, at the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, March 18.



NCPH President Patrick Moore shakes the hand of Nicolette Rohr, winner of a Graduate Student Travel Award, at the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, April 18.



Patrick Moore with Abby Curtin, winner of the NCPH New Professional Award, at the Awards Breakfast on Saturday, April 18.



(Left) Patrick Moore with Sheila Brennan and (Right) Sharon Leon of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, winner of the Outstanding Public History Project Award.

Nashville Annual Meeting Wrap Up

Attendees also noticed that there were *a lot* of us. In many ways, NCPH's growth is a real boon to our annual meeting: it means more perspectives and more opportunities to advocate for public history. However, NCPH is not immune to growing pains. Sessions were crowded and sometimes difficult to hear; wait times for the elevators were high; as registration soared unprecedentedly high, so did demand for NCPH's block of rooms at the conference hotel. As NCPH plans for next year's meeting in Baltimore, we're cognizant of the need to make sure that attendees are comfortable, while accommodating our growing community of members, friends, and partners. We've renegotiated our Baltimore contract to increase our room reservations and meeting space, and continue to plan ways to keep the flexible, friendly feel of our meetings.



Our meeting hotel was located just one block from the Tennessee State Capitol.



Participants enjoyed four days of exploring Music City on tours, and on their own.



Civil War historian and Nashville local James McDonough explains a site on the Civil War Bus Tour on Thursday, April 16.

Attendees pointed especially to this year's Public Plenary event, held in the Downtown Presbyterian Church, which brought together Freedom Rider Ernest "Rip" Patton and documentary filmmaker Laurens Grant for a moderated conversation on living and interpreting the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Over three hundred people attended the event, held in the beautiful Downtown Presbyterian Church. This memorable event was a highlight of the conference for many.



Public Plenary address, held in the historic Downtown Presbyterian Church, featuring a conversation between Freedom Rider Ernest "Rip" Patton (center) and filmmaker Laurens Grant (right), moderated by program chair Modupe Labode (left).



Keynote speaker Tiya Miles.



Keynote speaker Tiya Miles (right).

The final day of the meeting brought another highpoint: Tiya Miles's keynote address, which explored the connections between public history and historical fiction. Preceded by a talk by Wes Johnson, an NCPH founder, this Awards Breakfast and Keynote Address brought many attendees together to bid farewell to Nashville and to each other.



Thanks again to our fantastic Program and Local Arrangements Committee members; our fabulous team of volunteers; our sponsors and exhibitors; and all the presenters and attendees for helping to make NCPH 2015 a success!

NCPH Interim Executive Director, Stephanie Rowe with Nashville Local Arrangements Chair Bren Martin; Program Chair, Modupe Labode; and former NCPH Executive Director, John Dichtl.

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2016 NCPH Annual Meeting

Baltimore, Maryland

Renaissance
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March 16-19, 2016

Courtesy Visit Baltimore.

NCPH inspires public engagement with the past and serves the needs of practitioners in putting history to work in the world. We build community among historians, expand professional skills and tools, foster critical reflection on historical practice, and advocate for history and historians.

Members of NCPH have access to:

The Public Historian

— a print and online journal offering the latest original research, case studies, reviews, and coverage of the ever-expanding international field of public history

Professional Development

— continuing education in workshops, working groups, and critical reflection on practical and theoretical issues

News of the Field

— *Public History News*, email updates, and other NCPH reports will keep you current

Community

— connect to thousands of other public historians through our blog, *History@Work*, listservs, and the NCPH groups on Facebook and LinkedIn

Discounts on the Annual Meeting

— Baltimore 2016, Indianapolis 2017, Las Vegas 2018

Leadership Opportunities

— help to shape the profession and field by serving on committees and task forces

Advocacy Efforts

— NCPH, with the National Coalition for History, speaks on behalf of the profession and in the public interest on historical issues.

Online Resources

— Statement on Ethics and Professional Conduct, Tenure & Promotion guidelines, *Guide to Graduate Programs*, best practices, consultant listings, weekly job postings, and discounted JPASS access to journals

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